

REMARKS

Claims 1-11 and 16-19 are pending in the application. Claims 2 and 18 are allowed. With this reply, claims 1-11, 18, and 19 remain pending and claims 16 and 17 are canceled. Claims 16, 17, and 19 stand rejected as being indefinite under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph. Claim 1 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over Melissaris et al. (*Eur. Polymer J.* 25:455-460, 1989; hereafter “Melissaris”) in view of Seltzer et al. (U.S. Patent No. 3,729,448; hereafter “Seltzer”). Claims 1 and 3-8 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over Kawamonzen et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,316,170; hereafter “Kawamonzen”) in view of Melissaris and Seltzer. Claims 1 and 3-11 are also rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over Machida et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,159,654; hereafter “Machida”) in view of Melissaris and Seltzer. Applicants address each of these rejections below.

Claim Amendments

Claim 1 has been amended to incorporate the limitations of previously presented claim 17. Claim 19 has been amended to correct its dependency. Claims 16 and 17 have been canceled. Support for this amendment is found in the previously pending claims. No new matter has been added by the present amendment. Applicants reserve the right to pursue any canceled subject matter in this or in a continuing application.

Rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph

Claims 16, 17, and 19 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph as being indefinite. Claims 16 and 17 have been canceled and therefore, the rejection of these claims is moot.

As the basis of rejection of claim 19, the Office states that claim 19 depends upon a canceled claim (i.e., claim 14). Applicants have amended claim 19 to correct its claim dependency and therefore, this rejection should be withdrawn.

Rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a)

Claim 1 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over Melissaris in view of Seltzer. Claims 1 and 3-8 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over Kawamonzen in view of Melissaris and Seltzer. Claims 1 and 3-11 are also rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over Machida in view of Melissaris and Seltzer.

Applicants have amended claim 1 to incorporate the limitations of previously presented claim 17. Claims 3-11 depend from claim 1 and therefore, also incorporate the limitations of amended claim 1.

Previous claim 17 is nonobvious in view of the combinations of Melissaris and Seltzer; Kawamonzen, Melissaris, and Seltzer; and Machida, Melissaris, and Seltzer. The nonobviousness of the subject matter of previous claim 17 is acknowledged by the Office, as claim 17 was not rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over any combination of the cited prior art. As amended claim 1 and dependent claims 3-11 incorporate the nonobvious subject matter of previous claim 17, this rejection should be withdrawn.

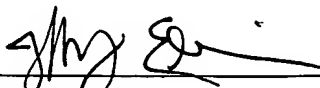
CONCLUSION

Applicants submit that the application is now in condition for acceptance and such action is hereby respectfully requested.

If there are any charges or any credits, please apply them to Deposit Account No. 03-2095.

Respectfully submitted,

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